

Issues in Urban and Rural Environments: GreenCOM Gender Reports

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GreenCOM The Environmental Education and Communication Project of USAID is jointly funded and managed by the Center for Environment; Center for Human Capacity Development and the **Office of Women in Development of the Bureau for Global Programs**, Field Support and Research. GreenCOM provides field support and conducts extensive operations research related to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of environmental education and communication programs in developing countries worldwide. Gender differences and the role of women play an important part in the impact of EE&C activities and, necessarily, in GreenCOM operations research and information exchange activities. The objective of R&D/WID in funding the services and activities is to integrate Women in Development (WID) issues, analyses, studies and information into GreenCOM activities. Experience has shown that integration of WID issues throughout a sector's activities produces greater impact than "add-on" WID activities. The same is thought to be true for large, complex projects such as GreenCOM. Although some funding was provided for "stand-alone" activities, it is integration that is sought by the provision of these funds.

Specifically, GreenCOM is expected to look at gender within the context of:

- target audience characteristics (including socio-economic, gender and cultural); attributes (attitudinal and behavioral) in relation to local environmental issues to provide a basis for understanding the potential for behavior change in relation to these issues and for designing effective educational strategies, messages and materials.
- Pre-testing and monitoring strategies, messages and materials to provide refinement and assure impact.
- Comparison studies between the impact of different educational strategies for similar objectives.
- Evaluation studies using standardized indicators across sites to better assess impact

GreenCOM has worked in 23 countries and has had resident advisers in 3 emphasis countries. GreenCOM also benefits from the presence on staff of a gender specialist who is able to assist in integrating gender concerns into project planning and design, training staff and consultants, and developing priority themes. Aside from engendering all GreenCOM activities, R&D/WID has asked for certain specific deliverables which include WID-specific research, papers, dissemination of lessons learned at conferences, exposure of WID issues in project literature and overall analyses of gender issues in project activities. The following pages illustrate some of the project's achievements in this regard.

The GreenCOM Project

GreenCOM was initiated in September 1993. Since that time one of its unique features has been the range of support it provides to USAID missions and the kinds of programs through which environmental education and communication (EE&C) messages are delivered. Communication is a cross-cutting activity, with very precise and systematic strategies and techniques. Like management and planning, most projects cannot do without some form of communication support. Regrettably few do. In its own activities GreenCOM's role is to enhance current Agency gender initiatives through its own wide portfolio of projects.

In the Philippines, GreenCOM supports a USAID Project concerned with governance and democracy issues. The political decentralization process has meant that local governments now have to operationalize programs and strategies that once had been the sole domain of the central Government. Through its EE&C efforts GreenCOM assists local governments, and civil society in general to participate in the decentralization process. Crucial to this effort is assuring the participation of women in establishing and implementing local systems to manage coastal and forest resources. In El Salvador GreenCOM is implementing a wide range of efforts that include school-based programs; urban issues including solid waste disposal and sanitation; as well as raising awareness in the general public of some of the crucial health and pollution related issues. In Ecuador GreenCOM provides support to the Charles Darwin Foundation in its efforts to integrate local populations into the conservation efforts in the Galapagos, and with the Africa Bureau, GreenCOM is promoting the inclusion of gender issues into national environmental policy efforts (urban and rural) through workshops with policy makers. This is just a sampling of GreenCOM activities. The project has a wide range of partners and works in complex and diverse settings giving it a rich resource from which to draw gender conclusions.

STUDIES AND OPERATIONS RESEARCH

As part of standardizing and systematizing EE&C, GreenCOM conducts a variety of studies, operations research activities, and evaluations. These ensure that impact has been achieved and mission strategic objectives are being met. Embedded in all these activities are gender concerns. The following list represents a small sample of the activities GreenCOM is undertaking.

Five African EE&C Assessments were conducted for the Africa Bureau. Each assessment contained an exploration of EE&C in the country as well as gender issues in the natural resources of each country. A report synthesizing the lessons learned has been produced in two languages (French and English) and has already received wide distribution. Published in April, 1996 *People and Their Environment*, a synthesis report of the Five Assessments, contains a gender chapter with results of the assessments and lessons learned. The five countries from which lessons were drawn are Namibia, Gambia, Guinea, Uganda and Madagascar. Aside from this report, the individual country assessments are also available. Among the findings:

- ▶ Gender considerations should be taken into account in school-based interventions in formal settings. For example, in Madagascar, many girls stop attending school after the primary grades. Formal programs should ensure that close school-community linkages are maintained, particularly since women are often the *de facto* natural resource managers in the home and community.
- ▶ Environmental educators need to concern themselves with the general bias in school systems against girls.
- ▶ Namibia's successful literacy program, which includes components on the environment, reaches high percentages of women. Future analysis of its success may help other programs.
- ▶ Non-formal interventions should take into account women's needs. Interpretive sites could include exhibits that depict both men and women as resource users and managers. Also, training of extension workers could place special emphasis on gender sensitivity. Recruitment programs for female extension workers are needed.
- ▶ There is a tendency to target certain environmental strategies to women (i.e., reforestation projects) because they appear to be a more willing/reliable audience without evaluating the impact of this on the family. In some instances, a tacit assumption that men could not change their environmental behaviors meant no efforts were made to include them in community action or other interventions.
- ▶ Prevailing thought in Madagascar is that since the country was once a matriarchal monarchy, gender issues do not need attention. Related misconceptions persist in all five countries studied and need to be addressed.
- ▶ Despite good intentions, few environmental or EE&C projects operationalize gender concerns in a meaningful manner.
- ▶ Conducting qualitative research during project design, and asking gender-sensitive questions about the roles and responsibilities of both men and women throughout the program process, will help integrate gender concerns.

Jordan Water Conservation program--In Jordan, GreenCOM partnered with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) to develop a curriculum for high school students enrolled in school environment clubs. The theme of the curriculum was water conservation. An additional objective of the project was to assist teachers to learn to use and appreciate interactive methods of learning, as an alternative to lectures--the traditional method of teaching. Because Jordanian schools are already segregated by sex (boys schools with male teachers and girls schools with female teachers) a gender study of differential knowledge, attitude and behavior among the participants was made possible. Additional areas for exploration by GreenCOM determined the

extent to which teachers used and liked interactive methods and, the extent to which children shared their new knowledge of water with their families, friends and neighbors.

These analyses were also disaggregated by gender and the lessons learned compiled into the final report, now available. Several highlights from these findings follow:

- ▶ More female than male teachers implemented the majority of activities from Unit 2 of the water conservation curriculum, on household water conservation. This unit was considered to be the most essential among the 5 units included in the curriculum.
- ▶ Female teachers who used the curriculum used a greater variety of water activities in their eco-clubs in comparison with female teachers who did not implement the curriculum. Exposure to the curriculum increased the number of activities used by female teachers to equal that of male teachers.
- ▶ Students who participated in the project had more positive scores on an aggregate scale of social behaviors (e.g. suggesting water conservation techniques to their parents) compared with students who did not participate. This effect was stronger for boys than for girls. This finding is particularly interesting given that initial focus group data suggested that Jordanians believe girls care more about, and are more responsible for safeguarding the environment, than boys.

Quito, Ecuador Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling--In Quito, a gender study of attitudes, knowledge and practices of urban households on solid waste disposal contributed to the body of knowledge that the municipality required to design a sustainable solid waste system. Household members in an unserved area of Quito were interviewed and the results given to an NGO, OIKOS, with whom GreenCOM partnered and to the Municipality. From the beginning it was anticipated that gender would play a major concern in several ways, including social divisions of labor related to solid waste disposal, payment for municipal services, and appreciation for the scheme established for cost recovery by the municipality. This document in final draft and will be available shortly.

Salient gender findings are provided below:

Among female respondents:

- ▶ Knowledge of garbage collection program guidelines; satisfaction with collection services; attitudes about giving commercially valuable waste to collectors; and social pressure from neighbors, spouses and children to separate garbage are the best predictors of garbage separation practices.

Among male respondents:

- ▶ Knowledge of garbage collection program guidelines, satisfaction with collection service and beliefs related to social pressure to separate garbage are variables that emerged as

predictors of waste separation practices. Male respondents place importance on whether or not their neighbors approve of garbage separation.

Machala, Ecuador Solid Waste Disposal --In Machala, Ecuador a study was conducted examining attitudes, knowledge and practices of urban households pertaining to solid waste disposal and provided information to the municipality required to evaluate a pilot solid waste collection system utilizing tricycles. Household members in different neighborhoods of the city with the pilot service, daily service, irregular service, and no service were interviewed. The relative importance of solid waste, in relationship to other community problems, was examined. Cost recovery issues were explored, communication channels to reach target audiences identified and promotional messages developed.

A sample of gender-related findings follows:

- ▶ The majority of households have multiple incomes. In half of the homes, two or more people contributed to the household's expenses. Among these households, the second income was provided by women half the time.
- ▶ The majority of respondents reported that the male in the couple contributed the most to pay for the household bills in general, and the last electric bill specifically, irrespective of reported socio-economic status. Consequently, men pay more for the waste collection service, which is funded through a surcharge on the electric bills. However, the proportion of women who paid the electric bill is higher in households in middle class neighborhoods (13%) than in lower class neighborhoods (6%).
- ▶ In the majority of households (88%), women are responsible for separating waste.
- ▶ In general, responsibility for the disposal of waste is shared by women and children. However, it appears as if among the lower class, men are more involved in this task than expected, particularly with respect to paper and metal products.
- ▶ Men and women generally have different perceptions about how frequently waste is disposed of, about the distance that must be traveled to dispose of waste, and about the time spent disposing of waste. Waste disposal is normally considered to be more time consuming by men than by women.
- ▶ Women largely control decision making about disposal of cooked and raw organic waste. Decision-making about handling other solid waste is shared by men and women. Just as with disposal of waste, men in the lower class are more likely to be involved in decision-making and management of waste than men in the middle class. However, there are differences in opinion among men and women about who makes the decisions: the majority of both men and women believe they decide how to dispose of glass.

- ▶ A significantly higher percentage of women than men believe the new pilot garbage collection service, using tricycles, is more convenient and easier to use than their previous service.
- ▶ Men, more often than women, cite the regularity of the pilot system and its low cost as reasons for their satisfaction with the service.
- ▶ More women than men believe that a municipal waste collection system is more effective, trustworthy, but at the same time, more expensive, than a private system. More men than women prefer a private garbage collection system.

Niger EE&C Assessment--GreenCOM provided technical assistance to USAID/Niamey in their support program to the land reform activities of the Government. Aside from its assistance to the Mission in recommending ways that a dialogue could be established in the country to discuss the measure and regulatory framework governing land tenure, GreenCOM recognized that land tenure schemes have major implications for women. GreenCOM investigated gender issues related to land ownership and distribution amongst various ethnic groups and prepared a chapter dealing with land tenure issues specific to Niger recommending amongst other things that a program informing women of their rights to land ownership, and a communication/education program showing how they can take advantage of the opportunity being afforded them by the Government, be offered. The study was done in November 1995 and the report is now complete.

Important gender findings include:

- ▶ Efforts to lighten the work load of women have included installing grinding mills and distributing agricultural tools, but only a small number of women have benefited from these efforts.
- ▶ *Nigérienne* women are very active in the informal and small business sector: approximately 83% of women are involved in revenue generating activities. However, participation of women in the paid labor force, particularly in decision-making positions, is minimal.
- ▶ As of 1994, girls represented only 37% of the total number of students in Niger. Due to economic crisis, the school is no longer perceived as an opportunity to gain employment and parents prefer to keep their daughters at home. Rural and nomadic women are the most educationally disadvantaged.
- ▶ Women in Niger are largely unaware of their legal rights under the three coexisting legal systems (civil, Islamic and customary law) and are victims of discrimination. According to Muslim law, a woman is perpetually under the guardianship of a man.

- ▶ In rural areas, women's participation in organizations remains weak, although they do cooperate with seasonal tasks. Seclusion is sporadically enforced by husbands and can impede women's efforts to organize.
- ▶ Women are not legally eligible to join cooperatives.
- ▶ Women's primary concerns are not environmental issues, but health and the survival of their children, then education and food security.
- ▶ Many EE&C initiatives in the past have not adapted their programs to the constraints of reaching rural women.

EE&C and water conservation in Egyptian Irrigation programs--GreenCOM participated in an activity designed to increase participation by community members in the design and management of irrigation programs at the local level. Interviews with local experts revealed that women were an unrecognized factor in farming. In its design of qualitative research GreenCOM placed special emphasis on women. The results indicated that women's work and responsibilities were tied to the maintenance of the irrigation canals (*mesqas*), but that their needs were not taken into account when canals were upgraded. As part of its efforts to get the Ministry to be more responsible to communities, a video was prepared expressing community concerns and including concerns of women. As a consequence of the video, the Ministry recognized the need to deal with the women's concerns substantively and has mandated that new, improved irrigation systems will also include the establishment of solid waste sites in which women can dispose of household refuse. The final report and video of this project are available and a Lessons Learned document is presently being written. This activity will be the basis of a second effort in Egypt.

Specific gender findings are presented below:

- ▶ Respondents suggested that as women have gained greater access to education in rural areas, they have become less involved in farming. Intergenerational differences between women are striking with older women more involved in farming and having a larger voice in community affairs.
- ▶ Female participants stated that many younger women have become socially apathetic and are not interested in looking for solutions that would solve community issues such as the *mesqa* or garbage disposal because they are now concerned with things other than farming.
- ▶ Women indicated they no longer wash dishes in the *mesqa* water because it has become so polluted. This was previously a major source of social interaction among women.
- ▶ Although some women are employed outside the home, female participants stated there

generally was little opportunity for employment for them in the village: no small businesses, no factories. Many go to the fields with their husbands, but many indicated they do not like it.

- ▶ Younger educated women expressed their frustration at the lack of jobs but did not have any ideas for small business projects. Younger women largely spent their time at home cleaning, caring for children, and tending small farm animals which are often sold in the market.
- ▶ Men generally have part-time jobs, either mornings or evenings, and farm the remainder of the day.
- ▶ Female participants complained about the generally high cost of farming relative to the low profit margins and amount of effort needed.
- ▶ Men reported that women are the primary polluters of the *mesqa* because they have no where else to dispose of garbage. They indicated that unless an alternative dumping site is found, no amount of information or advice will induce behavior change.
- ▶ The village mayor is the most respected member of the community. Within the home, husbands have the most influence and wife's mothers are considered the next most powerful.
- ▶ Women, particularly older women, are discouraged from attending public ceremonies such as the inauguration of a mosque or a new school, especially if strangers are present.
- ▶ Older female participants were the only group that explained the relationship between watering speed and the position of the field relative to the *mesqa*. People at the end of the *mesqa* often have to pay to rent pumps.
- ▶ The amount of water in the *mesqa* was perceived by women and men to be insufficient, which causes the end of the *mesqa* to become dry. Some women added that, because water is not regularly available in the *mesqas*, it has ceased to matter whether the *mesqa* is full of waste or not.
- ▶ Female participants stated the primary problem facing the village is garbage disposal and suggested that they would be willing to pay to have a government garbage truck collect the refuse. Women also felt burning garbage was acceptable while men did not. Men felt the government should provide a dumping site.
- ▶ Young men claimed the whole issue of cleaning the *mesqa* is linked to an illicit agreement between the director of the cooperative and the deputy mayor, who own and rents out an underground water pump to villagers.

El SALVADOR--GreenCOM's El Salvador programs are complex and gender is integrated into all its efforts. For example, one study examined the use of fuelwood by rural populations. Based on the findings, GreenCOM worked with women to promote fuel efficient stoves and also prepared messages for men that addressed their concerns.

Results indicated that two gender associated reasons in particular drove the high demand for fuel wood:

- ▶ While women were primary consumers of wood for household fuel use, it was principally at the direction of their husbands, whose expectations of proper food included freshly made tortillas at any moment, that fires were kept stoked to be able to make these fresh tortillas.
- ▶ Husbands' perceptions of a warm and loving atmosphere in the home were enhanced by the constant presence of a lit hearth.

INTEGRATED GENDER ACTIVITIES

Training:

In an effort to assure integration of gender activities in all its work, GreenCOM has added some innovative steps, both to its internal administrative procedures, as well as to its field work. In assuring that GreenCOM staff and consultants had the minimum skills to integrate gender into their specific activities, scopes of work for consultants were written in such a way as to include and report on gender information. Beginning with GreenCOM's efforts in El Salvador, every consultant hired by the project was asked for specific gender information related to their scope of work.

GreenCOM has had two training programs specifically on gender to sensitize core staff, including support staff, how gender concerns can get integrated. Working closely with the environmental specialist of the WID Office, GreenCOM prepared a brief gender presentation for the GreenCOM Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and for the combined field and home office staff. An all-day workshop for field and home office staff brought out some of the frustrations felt by concerned and committed program staff who nevertheless lacked specific skills in gender analysis.

GreenCOM has assisted in the training of field resident advisers through technical assistance by its gender specialist and the provision of books, materials and training modules. It has also provided specific, formal training activities for its counterpart organizations. In the **Philippines**, GreenCOM's gender specialist provided a workshop to 24 of the Department of Environment

and Natural Resources senior staff, on the integration of gender issues into their program cycle. In **Egypt**, GreenCOM's gender specialist gave a workshop on gender issues to staff of the newly established Communication Division within the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources (MPWWR). In **Jordan**, the gender specialist gave a training program for its counterpart agency (RSCN) in gender issues and why it was important to take them into account in field activities. At its home office GreenCOM has held round tables on specific environmental issues such as problems associated with solid waste disposal to which it invited technical experts in the field. At these same fora GreenCOM explored the gender ramifications of what they had learned and the impact on communication programs. These have proven to be useful activities.

Indicators:

Because of GreenCOM's behavioral approach to communication, and its emphasis on research-based communication, GreenCOM has been sensitive to the need to develop indicators that will measure its own activities. In a number of countries, GreenCOM's efforts in this regard have proved useful to the missions also.

In the Philippines, GreenCOM has prepared for the mission a report entitled *IEC/Social Marketing Indicators* describing the environmental indicators necessary to support the mission's strategic objectives in communication of environmental issues in coastal, industrial and forest programs. A separate chapter on indicators to measure gender integration has been included. Two studies specific to gender and natural resources will be done in the Philippines using local expertise that will enhance the research base.

Dissemination of Lessons learned:

GreenCOM has shared its lessons with the development community in Washington through symposia, special presentations, and receptions at which new materials and documents were presented. Special presentations to USAID included December 1994, when Dr. Irma Allen of Swaziland, resident adviser to Gambia; Jose Ignacio Mata, resident adviser to El Salvador; and the GreenCOM gender specialist, Mona Grieser made presentations on the programs in Gambia, El Salvador, and Jordan respectively. In October 1995, GreenCOM made a presentation to the USAID/WID Office on the Ecuador and Egypt initiatives. Other, more informal presentations have been made to USAID. GreenCOM has been able to share the experience outside the USAID development community by working with other donor agencies. GreenCOM's gender specialist represented the project at Earth Day 1995, by chairing the UN commemoration in New York, dedicated to gender issues. GreenCOM shared its gender experiences in policy promotion at a UNEP special seminar on gender in Nairobi, in 1995. GreenCOM's presence in Beijing was documented by WETV, an environmental TV network established by the UN system for global distribution, as was GreenCOM participation in UN Earth Day commemorations. The WETV system received its inaugural transmission during the Beijing conference.

IN THE GREENCOM PIPELINE

Sustainable Cities--Haiti (in progress). This project focuses on the delivery of piped water services to poor residential neighborhoods of Cite Soleil. GreenCOM, working with the Environmental Health Project (EHP) and a local NGO, has been integrating gender analysis applied to qualitative research activities leading to program planning and design, recognizing that women have an important role in collecting and using water for home consumption even in urban areas. In addition GreenCOM is taking into account the economic benefits to certain women sellers and carriers of water, in an effort to avoid putting them out of business when piped water is introduced. Finally GreenCOM is assuring that women have a voice in the community decisions about cost for services, and returns to the community from water charges.

Sustainable Cities--Morocco (in progress) GreenCOM, also in partnership with EHP, has designed a Participatory workshop to enable stakeholders to come to consensus on development of a sustainable solid waste disposal scheme for a poor residential neighborhood of Fez. Women and men are important to the current local collection system and GreenCOM will ensure that systems to be established will include these stakeholders.

Africa--In Mali, GreenCOM's gender specialist worked with the mission on some of the issues related to that country's extremely high illiteracy rate for girls, suggesting that the mission consider a focus that included girls both in and out of school with environmental messages. The "School to community" initiative has been supported by the **Africa Bureau**, which has provided the resources to investigate the idea in two countries in Africa. The Africa Bureau has also provided GreenCOM resources to conduct workshops for policy makers, designed to impress on them the need to integrate gender at policy level. Tanzania will be a site for this workshop.

Conferences and papers:

GreenCOM is expected to disseminate the gender lessons it has learned at a number of fora. Some of these are accessible through partnerships with other agencies and donors, some directly through GreenCOM channels. For example, GreenCOM has recently published *Human Nature*, a newsletter speaking to the experiences of communication in general in forwarding environmental objectives. One issue of this document will be devoted to gender issues. *Human Nature* has a print run of over 2120 pieces in English, Spanish and French. Its first edition includes articles related to gender concerns. Specific activities funded by GreenCOM include:

GreenCOM's gender specialist gave a paper on gender, communication, environment and policy to UNEP special seminar on gender issues in environment, in Nairobi in May 1995. This paper is being revised for publication as a gender booklet. Some of the findings have been incorporated in other GreenCOM documents.

In April 1995, GreenCOM's gender specialist participated in a UNICEF seminar on gender issues, as a resource person specializing in changing men's behavior patterns in natural resource management.

GreenCOM's gender specialist and GreenCOM's Gambia Resident Advisor, presented two papers at the **Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing** on several occasions to large audiences. The discussion focused on GreenCOM work in Jordan and the Gambia, as well as workshops on communication/social marketing for the environment and Swaziland's grassroots environmental movement. Special presentation materials were prepared for this workshop and a bibliography of gender-related materials available through the GreenCOM Clearinghouse was distributed. GreenCOM representatives also spoke on panels sponsored by UNEP, WEDO, UNIFEM and UNICEF.

From El Salvador, GreenCOM supported the Project technical adviser and another Salvadoran gender specialist (NGO consultant) to attend the regional Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Women, for Latin America in Argentina. The two presented two papers, one on Lessons Learned in gender from the GreenCOM Project, one on general gender issues in Natural Resource Management in El Salvador.

Irma Allen, Resident Adviser for GreenCOM./Gambia, and Mrs. NDey Issatou Njai, Executive Director of the National Environment Agency, Gambia attended the African regional Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Women held in Dakar, Senegal and presented a joint paper on the social mobilization and awareness program known as The Gambia Awards scheme. This paper is in final publication.

The Middle East regional Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Women in Amman, Jordan was attended by two country representatives from GreenCOM's Jordan Water Project. The representatives were the Project Coordinator at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and a member of the RSCN Board responsible for education programs and gender issues. A paper on the GreenCOM lessons learned from the schools program was delivered. The Jordan gender research activity is in final publication by GreenCOM.

In addition to the activities in which GreenCOM staff and developing country consultants have already participated, GreenCOM is giving one gender paper at the Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul in 1996 based on the Quito and Haiti experiences. In November 1996, GreenCOM is also hosting the first International EE&C Conference under the project, and among the many developing country participants are gender experts funded by the project.

